

Riley Brown House  
2 Thayer Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-174

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
74-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## RILEY BROWN HOUSE

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
74-

Address: 2 Thayer Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

PLAT 16, LOT 354

Present Owner  
and Occupant: James K. Edwards

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This is one of three small houses built close to-  
gether on Thayer Street between about 1817 and  
1830, and is an example of the simpler houses of  
that period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

Records of  
#2 THAYER STREET.....Wood

Bet. 1829 and 1836 (1834)

- 1795 Elizabeth Cozzens sells a tract of land to Daniel Tillinghast bounded; S/ly 113-1/2' by Transit Street; E/ly 88' by Samuel Wilkie; N/ly 113-1/2' by heirs of Chris. Arnold; W/ly 88' by Thomas Thayer. . . . Deed Book 24, page 96, in Providence City Hall.
- 1802 Daniel Tillinghast sells this property to Calvin Walker housewright. . . . Deed Book 28, page 317, in Providence City Hall.
- 1817 Calvin Walker sells property to Harding Stoddard, blacksmith, for \$200. . . . Deed Book 46, page 3, in Providence City Hall.
- 1825 Harding Stoddard sells property to Luther Pearson, merchant, Bounded: S/ly 48' on Transit Street; E/ly 88' by Thayer Street (recently laid out); N/ly 48' by Samuel Pearson and John Fisher; W/ly 88' by land of Thomas Thayer. . . . Deed Book 47, page 223, in Providence City Hall.

- 1829 Luther Pearson sells the same property to Riley Brown for \$250. . . . Deed Book 58, page 142, in Providence City Hall.
- 1836 Riley Brown sells to John Crocker for \$1050, property with dwelling house bounded W/ly 32' by land of George Ormsbee; N/ly 48' by Riley Brown; E/ly 32' by Thayer Street; S/ly 48' by Transit Street. . . . Deed Book 68, page 225, in Providence City Hall.
- 1865 Heirs of John Crocker sell property for \$2800 to Ann E. Franceville, wife of William, at auction. . . . Deed Book 173, page 125, in Providence City Hall.
- 1872 Property taxed to William Franceville Estate. .
- 1956 Property owned by Beatrice O. Chace.
- 1959 Property sold to James K. Edwards.
2. Date of erection: Between 1829 and 1836.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
December 1961.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a very small, one-and-a-half-story, frame house with an elevated basement at one end. It is at one end of a group of three small, simple houses built close together, including also the Luther Pearson House at 6 Thayer Street (in HABS) and number 10 Thayer Street.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Small rectangular house facing east, about 30' (three bay front) x 27', one-and-a-half stories plus elevated cellar at south side.
2. Foundations: Brick, common bond, south side. Other sides fieldstone, partly plastered.

3. Wall construction: Timber frame, plank walls, clapboards, beaded corner boards.
4. Porches, stoops: Wood porch, up eight steps, to front entrance. Similar rear porch, three steps high.
5. Chimneys: One large brick center chimney.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Six-panel front door in doorway with pilaster trim and simplified cornice on brackets. Six-panel door on south side to cellar. Lighted, panel door on east rear, probably later, top light, simple unrelieved frame.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows except twelve over twelve light on rear, simple molded frames, no shutters.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Ridge off center toward front, gambrel roof in front, low pitched shed roof in back - shingles.
  - b. Cornice: Molded horizontal and raking cornice, returned slightly at the corners.
  - c. Dormers: Two shed roof dormers on east front, each with two, six over six light double hung windows.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central chimney, five-room plan, with stairway in northwest room instead of against the chimney in entrance hall. Two rooms on second floor. Cellar room formerly used as a shop.
2. Stairways: Simple enclosed wood stairway, L-shape run with windows at the bottom.
3. Flooring: Boards average 9" - 14" wide.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, papered or painted.
5. Doorways and doors: Molded mitered doorways, six or four raised panel doors.
6. Trim: Simple molded wood trim, baseboards and windows.

7. Hardware: Mostly later iron latches on first floor, earlier iron latches on second floor, one case lock with brass knobs on first floor, butt hinges.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Radiators. Three fireplaces in each of the two main rooms on first floor and one bedroom on second floor. One-story wood mantel in southeast parlor, paneled pilasters, high entablature, thin projecting mantel shelf.

D. Site

1. Orientation: Northwest corner Thayer and Transit Streets, house at the sidewalk line on south and east; small rear yard, not planted.
2. Enclosures: Wood fence on south side.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
National Park Service  
December 1961